

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8050

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PK, AF

SUBJECT: BBC REPORT OF ANTI-PAK GUERRILLA MOVEMENT

SPONSORED BY AFGHANISTAN

REF: ISLAMABAD 1087

1. BBC NEWS ITEM OF JANUARY 27 WAS BY TOWYN MASON (WHO, BRITISH TELL US, IS YOUNG AND RELATIVELY NEW TO THE BUSINESS). INTERVIEW WAS IN THE FORM OF A SHORT REPORT, FULL TEXT OF WHICH WE REPORT PARA 3 BELOW.

2. REPORT WAS INTRODUCED BY FOLLOWING TEXT READ BY ANNOUNCER: "IN AFGHANISTAN THE GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THE LETTER RECENTLY SENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL CONCERNING THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES OVER THE PAKISTANI PROVINCES OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN, WHICH BORDER AFGHANISTAN. MEANWHILE, ALSO IN AFGHANISTAN, THE EXILED LEADER OF THE MILITANT OPPOSITION TO THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT IN THESE TWO

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PROVINCES, MR. AJMAL KHATTAK, HAS SPOKEN ABOUT HIS MOVE-

MENT. FROM KABUL COMES THIS REPORT BY TOWYN MASON."

3. MAIN REPORT AS FOLLOWS: "MR. AJMAL KHATTAK WAS FORMERLY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY, WHICH WAS THE DOMINANT PARTY IN THE FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN UNTIL IT LOST POWER AFTER DIFFERENCES WITH THE PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER, MR. BHUTTO. MR. KHATTAK EXILED HIMSELF TO KABUL NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, FOLLOWING AN OPPOSITION RALLY IN LAHORE WHICH HE WAS LEADING AND DURING WHICH A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY POLICE FIRE. HE IS NOW THE FOCUS OF AN UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION CALLED THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT. THIS, HE TOLD ME, HAS SEVEN HUNDRED COMMANDERS IN PAKISTAN, EACH HEADING A BAND OF BETWEEN FIVE AND 25 MEN. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, IT IS LINKED CLOSELY WITH INSURGENT GROUPS IN BALUCHISTAN WHICH, HE CLAIMS, CAN MUSTER A TOTAL FIGHTING STRENGTH OF SEVERAL THOUSAND. IN PAKISTAN, WHERE SPECIAL COURTS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO TRY CASES OF TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION, MR. KHATTAK HAS BEEN NAMED IN CONNECTION WITH THE WAVE OF BOMBINGS THAT HAS OCCURRED OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO, PARTICULARLY IN THE FRONTIER PROVINCE. BUT HE BLAMED THESE EITHER ON EXASPERATED YOUNG FOLLOWERS OF THE MOVEMENT OR ON ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT IT, EXPLAINING THAT THE MOVEMENT HAD NOT YET DECIDED ON LAUNCHING ARMED STRUGGLE. HE ALSO DENIED THAT GUERRILLAS WERE BEING TRAINED IN AFGHANISTAN. MR. KHATTAK SAID HIS AIM WAS SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN PROVINCES, WHICH IS ALSO WHAT AFGHANISTAN IS SEEKING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY HAVE BECOME PART OF PAKISTAN AS AN UNJUST LEGACY OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM. HE SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE EVEN IF THEY VOTED TO STAY IN PAKISTAN, THOUGH HE WAS FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THEIR FUTURE LIE THERE. HE ALSO SAID HE BELIEVED THAT HIS FORMER N.A.P. COLLEAGUES IN PAKISTAN, LED BY MR. WALI KHAN, WERE MISTAKEN TO TRY AND FIND A FORMULA TO SATISFY THE BALUCH AND PAKHTOON PEOPLE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF PAKISTAN. SUCH EFFORTS ARE BOUND TO FAIL, HE SAID."

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